



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,
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CAREX PAUPERCULA **POOR SEDGE**

Poor Sedge is a grass-like perennial that grows in small clusters with flowering stems that are 15-40 cm tall, arising from short or long rhizomes. Roots have a yellowish-brown fuzzy covering. Stems are conspicuously covered at the base with the dried leaves from the previous year. The leaves are mostly flat, 2-4 mm wide, and on the lower half of the stem. The inflorescence consists of a narrow terminal spike of male flowers and usually 2-3 mainly female spikes, the lower of which are nodding on long stalks. The terminal spike is 4-12 mm long and 2-4 mm wide; the lower spikes are 4-22 mm long and 4-8 mm wide, and often have a few male flowers at the base. The bract is slightly longer than the terminal spike. Scales are light or dark brown, often with a greenish midvein. The perigynia are pale green, glabrous, oval in outline, and 2-3 mm long. Each perigynium has 3 stigmas and an achene that is 3 sided. Fruit mature in July-August.

CAREX PAUPERCULA occurs with *C. LIMOSA* in peatland habitat, and the two can be confused. It differs from the latter in having leaves at the base of the plant and male flowers at the base of spikes.